

COMMISSION ON AGING

February 7, 2022

Minutes

Present: Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks, Philip Markuszka, Beth Hillson, Susan Pearlman

Liaisons Present: Lisa Zerio, Director of Parks and Recreation
Patti White, Senior Services Program Supervisor

Meeting called to order at 5:33 p.m.

A motion was made by Denise Weeks to amend the agenda to include the election of a COA Chair. The motion was seconded by Susan Pearlman. Voting in favor of the motion were: Phil Markuszka, Beth Hillson, Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks and Susan Pearlman. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Denise Weeks to elect Gayle Kataja as the COA Chair. The motion was seconded by Beth Hillson. Voting in favor of the motion were: Phil Markuszka, Beth Hillson, Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks and Susan Pearlman. Motion passed unanimously.

A motion was made by Denise Weeks to hold the election of Vice-Chair at the March 7th COA meeting. The motion was seconded by Gayle Kataja. Voting in favor of the motion were: Phil Markuszka, Beth Hillson, Gayle Kataja, Denise Weeks and Susan Pearlman. Motion passed unanimously.

MINUTES:

Minutes of the meeting held on November 1, 2021 were accepted as written.

COMMUNICATIONS & ANNOUNCEMENTS:

Patti White stated that the Town had received the formal Certificate of Approval from the national AARP of the Age-Friendly Community Action Plan.

LIAISON REPORTS: Patti reported that she spoke with the President of the local AARP chapter about the group's future plans. At this point the group is not meeting and is planning to meet in July. At that time, they intend to decide on the future of the chapter.

DEPARTMENT REPORTS:

Lisa Zerio reported that there were 121 Food Bank requests processed during January by the Social Services Department and energy applications are currently being taken until 5/14. The Renter's Rebate program ended on October 1, with approximately 291 applications processed.

Lisa also stated that food gift cards were still being distributed at this time with the plans to create a self-select food pantry beginning to take shape.

The Social and Senior Services Department assisted with the distribution of masks and test kits to low-income and vulnerable residents with a focus on those who live in the town's housing developments and those who use Dial-A-Ride transportation.

Patti reported the following:

- The department scheduled over 150 tax appointments for the AARP Tax Aid program.
- Programs where social distancing can be maintained are operating with some limitations.
- The lunch program is operating with limited capacity.
- The holiday luncheons for Valentines Day and St. Patrick's Day were pushed out due to Covid. The new dates are: March 1 and March 22.
- The Chores program is continuing to serve residents during Covid.
- Grants will be submitted for renewal funding for the Chores program to the North Central Area Agency on Aging and to AARP for a grant to create an Enabling Intergenerational Garden on the RCC grounds.
- A Matter of Balance Program will be provided in March and efforts are underway to work with the Chase Family Movement Disorder Center to provide either dance or Yoga classes for individuals with a movement disorder.

OLD BUSINESS:

Age-Friendly Community Initiative

Lisa informed the group that the proposed FY23 budget includes funding to support components of the AFC Action Plan. Resources may include the Operating budget and/or the ARPA (American Rescue Plan Act). Currently there is approximately \$150,000 proposed in the budget for Public Parks/Age-Friendly initiative. This could include funding for AFC items including but not limited to: benches, shade structures, cameras, charging stations and improving accessibility at our parks.

Lisa reported that with the help of two Eagle Scouts the town has compiled a list of benches in town and their location and condition. Efforts are also underway to inventory accessibility to fields and parks.

Patti reviewed feedback from Bill Armbruster, Senior Advisor, AARP Livable Communities, on the town's AFC Action Plan. The group agreed to review his suggestions/questions at the March meeting.

The members agreed to postpone setting a date for a joint COA/CLT meeting. Gayle will meet with Lisa and Patti to discuss the history of the AFC initiative and future plans to move the initiative forward.

New Business:

None

ADJOURNMENT

The meeting adjourned at 6:55 p.m.

Respectfully Submitted,
Patti White, Acting Secretary

